

be applied, and the importance of preserving the library for ever, is its construction in a mode to prevent injury to books, and to guard against fire. The walls of the building are hollow, which permits the plastering to be laid immediately on the bricks, instead of on laths, nailed to furring, according to the common practice.

State-house at Columbus.—We understand that the new State-house, now erecting at Columbus, Ohio, will be, when completed, a magnificent edifice, far surpassing any similar state public building in the country.

Public Parks.—The *Boston Evening Transcript* says:—Why will not our cities, great and small, old and new, make timely and liberal provision for public parks, before land has become so high as to become un-purchaseable for such objects? Shall the experience of ages—and the "precepts upon precepts" of physiologists and physicians have no effect? The County Medical Society of Philadelphia have lately had a meeting, at which they adopted strong resolutions on the subject.

American Sculptors in Italy.—A correspondent of one of the American papers gives particulars of all the American artists in Italy. He says,—Powers's studio is filled with the works of his mind, and is resorted to by all the American and many of the English tourists. His allegorical statue of California is a fine work of art. It is now nearly ready to be cut in marble. Greenough has nearly completed his great work for the capital. He is now on a tour through Switzerland, having left Florence some two months ago, to refresh himself after a hard year's labour. Kellogg, the painter, has recently returned, after an absence of four years in the United States. He is now engaged in making some paintings descriptive of Oriental life. Among the attractions in Florence at this time, in the way of modern art, is the statue of "Ruth," by Mr. Randolph Rogers, of New York. The hair falls in long natural masses over a neck and shoulders of exquisite form and delicacy. In one hand rests a few ears of wheat, and the other seems timidly arrested over the scattered stems, as if she hesitated in the continuance of her task before the great Boaz. One knee is still upon the ground, and the other slanted as if in the act of rising; a loose robe falls over the left shoulder, and the folds of a cincture cover the lower portion of the figure, leaving the outline distinctly developed. I understand that it has been purchased by Mr. Dudley Seldon, of New York. Mr. Hart, the Kentucky sculptor, is busily engaged upon a round of ideal studies. Kentucky may well be proud of the stone-mason, who, rising from his humble sphere by the unaided force of his talents, modelled the best bust that has ever been made of Kentucky's greatest statesman. Mr. Galt, of Virginia, is engaged upon a bust of Payce, which, I understand, has been ordered by the young men of his native town, in token of their high appreciation of his talents.

Brick Machines.—Amongst the recent patents we find several for improvements in brick machines. J. Riddle, of Kentucky, says:—"The object of my improvement in the manufacture of brick by machinery, is to bring and maintain an equal pressure upon all parts of the brick when in the mould, and thus to avoid a disturbance of the substance of any part subsequent to pressure, and the consequent liability to crack and separate. Having thus fully described the nature and construction of my improvements in brick machines, what I claim therein as new, is the block or lip, substantially as described, hugging closely the mould wheel, immediately behind its point of contact with the pressure roller, in order to prevent any disturbance of the mass after having passed the point of contact." Isaac Gregg, Pennsylvania, says:—"What I claim as my invention, is the placing the auxiliary pressure roller, or its equivalent, between the main roller and the knife, for the purpose of subjecting the surplus clay, after it is elevated above the tops of the moulds, to the action of pressure, before removing the same by the said knife, substantially as herein set forth. I also

claim the subjecting the upper surface of the clay in each mould to a rubbing pressure by means of a plate or its equivalent, placed above the tops of the moulds, in combination with some mechanical device for forcing up the moveable bottoms of the said moulds, whilst passing under the said plate, substantially in the manner and for the purpose herein set forth."

Iron Tombs.—In the list of designs registered is one by H. K. Flinchbaugh, Pennsylvania, for a cast-iron "cemetery tomb," ornamented as described.

Mortising Machine.—A very ingenious rotary mortising machine has been put in operation in Phila. It consists of a circular saw, so constructed as to make a perfectly true, square, and clean mortise of any dimensions, in either hard or soft wood, and completes the work in about the same time required to remove the chips of the ordinary machinery. The operation of the machine is effected by placing the board edgewise upon an iron bed, which is balanced above the saw by weights suspended on either side of the framework. The bed is moved downwards, and by this process the saw passes through an opening in the bed and is brought in contact with the wood, through which it cuts instantaneously.

Steam Stone-cutting.—Not long ago, Mr. Charles Wilson, of Springfield, Mass., invented a machine for dressing and rubbing stone, which has proved, in practical application, to be astonishingly effective. The dressing of stone by hand will soon in a great measure be done away with. The slow plodding of the mallet and chisel contrasts strongly indeed, with the rapid evolution of the steam cutter. At the foot of 28th-street, East River, New York city, the works of the Empire Stone Dressing Company are located. The establishment is conducted on a most extensive scale, occupying about five acres of ground, and employing a steam-engine of 100 horse power. Huge blocks of stone are lifted by steam from the vessel at the dock, and placed upon a railroad track extending to the main building, and conveyed by means of a truck to the remarkable machine. The adjustment of the cutters is but the work of an instant, and then, by the push of a lever, the stone chips begin to fly like shavings from a board. One of these machines can do more work in ten minutes than a man can do in a whole day by hand. Our mechanical readers can form an idea of the appearance of the steam stone-cutting machine when we tell them that it closely resembles Daniel's board-planing machine, the cutters of which are placed at the extremity of horizontal arms, and with them revolve, cutting the wood as it passes slowly along below. The cutters of the stone machine consist of small thin steel wheels sharpened to an edge, so that, while passing over the stone, they revolve, but at the same time cut. It is in this peculiar formation of the cutters that the value of Wilson's patent consists.

Base for Man.—By the year two thousand, says an American paper, it is probable that manual labour will have utterly ceased under the sun, and the occupation of the adjective "hard-fisted" will have gone for ever. They have now, in New Hampshire, a potato-digging machine which, drawn by horses down the rows, digs the potatoes, separates them from the dirt, and loads them up into the cart, while the farmer walks alongside, whistling "Hail Columbia," with his hands in his pockets.

Hotels.—New York probably is destined to become one vast assemblage of spacious hotels, with magnificent stores under them. The Cooper House, in front of Niblo's theatre, is drawing towards completion, and will be opened before May. This will be one of the largest houses of entertainment in the world. It will contain six hundred rooms, which is two hundred more than the Astor. The St. Nicholas, also, is assuming its beautiful marble front space, and will be ready for occupancy when the birds and merchants come back.—*Home Journal*, Nov. 22.

Art-Union of London in America.—The subscription-list to the London Art-Union, at

Boston, to the present time, numbers 189. The engraving for the present year, "An English Merry Making in the Olden Time," may be obtained at once, both there and in England.

Tile Fronts to Houses.—Fronting houses with tiles has been introduced into Philadelphia. The tiles are four inches thick, cut into squares, and cemented together by the ordinary process. They are of white clay, with exceedingly close grain, are differently coloured, and hardened by the highest heat used in the manufacture of earthenware. The surface presents the smoothness of glass, and the colours are vivid.

RECOLLECTIONS OF VENICE.

HISTORY, poetry, and art, have given associations to Venice which cannon-balls cannot destroy. There seems every reason, however, to expect, that many of the material pegs on which they hang, remnants of ancient beauty touched but with gentle hands by Time, will yield to "villanous salt-petre," arrangements having been made by the Austrians to effect their destruction on the first convenient opportunity. With increased gladness, therefore, we hail the progress of Mr. Ruskin's Examples of its architecture, and earnestly hope that Mars may be kept down, and Apollo and the Muses remain in the ascendant, at all events long enough to enable him to complete his work.*

A first visit to Venice is, indeed, a delight. Every thing about it is novel to a foreigner, and full of fascination. What is that long, low wall, with openings in it to let the tide through? "This is the railroad bridge, conspicuous above all things. But at the end of these dismal arches there rises, out of the wide waters, a straggling line of low and confused brick buildings, which, but for the many towers which are mingled among them, might be the suburbs of an English manufacturing town. Four or five domes, pale, and apparently at a greater distance, rise over the centre of the line; and the object which first catches the eye is a sullen cloud of black smoke brooding over the northern half of it, and which issues from the belfry of a church. It is Venice."

After traversing the railway bridge, nearly a mile and a-half in length, which stretches across the Lagoon, the first words which greet the ear on emerging from the station are, "Gondola, Signore?" and you, with your "impediments," are wafted to your hotel in this very un-English railway cab. But even in Venice the merely useful gradually drives out the ornamental, and the apparition of ugly, yellow, barge-looking craft, with "Omnibus alla Strada Ferrata" painted on them, gives a shock to one's romance. On all sides one is reminded of what our own poets have said of the sea-girt city. Byron's memory still haunts the spot his genius has immortalized. One sunny afternoon, a few weeks ago, the writer was taken across in a gondola to the Armenian Convent, whither Byron went to study the language. On asking the *père* who accompanied us over the establishment, if Byron's name were still remembered there, he answered with energy, "Oh yes, and we are now about to print in English an Armenian work which he translated." This convent contains at present about fifty persons, twenty *pères* and thirty scholars. Even going to and returning from the theatre at night in a gondola, as many of our readers will remember, has in it something romantic; leaving the brilliantly-lighted house and coming out immediately on to the dark water, with the strange outlines of the black gondolas dimly shown by the glare of a torch, or the glimmer of the rowers' lanterns. The Fenice is a handsome house; the decorations are white and gold; but it was only half-full when we were there, and looked cold and deserted. Soldiers with fixed bayonets were stationed at intervals in the pit, and out of a group of fifteen persons near the centre entrance, seven or eight were in military costume.

We have no occasion to speak of the

* Examples of the Architecture of Venice, selected and drawn to Measurement from the Edifices. By John Ruskin. London: Smith and Elder; P. and D. Colnaghi. 1851. Parts I. II. and III.